

PRESS RELEASE

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel calls on all stakeholders in Nigeria to make the 2019 elections a success in the interest of the country, the sub-region and the continent

Abuja, 23 November 2018 - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), M. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, today completed a two-week Pre-Election Mission to Nigeria. The objective of the mission which took place was from 11 to 23 November, was to sustain United Nations' efforts to support peaceful, free, fair and credible elections in February and March 2019, with particular focus on hotspots States.

Following on earlier visit in October during which he was received by the candidate of the APC, President Mohamed Buhari, the Chiefs of Security Services, the Nigerian Bar Association and Civil Society Organizations, Mohamed Ibn Chambas on his current visit consulted with key stakeholders, including PDP presidential candidate, former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, the Chair of the National Peace Committee and former Head of State Abdulsalami Abubakar, the Chair of INEC, Prof Yakubu Mahmood; former Head of State and senior statesman Gen. Yakubu Gowon; prominent private sector leader Alhaji Aliko Dangote; Director-General of the Buhari Campaign Organization, Hon Rotimi Amaechi; and the National Chairman of the PDP, Prince Uche Secondus. He also visited the following states: Anambra, Benue, Kaduna and Rivers States, where he met with the Governors, Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs), the security forces, and other stakeholders. On Friday November 23, he briefed the diplomatic corps on the outcome of his mission, during which he was joined by the President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, Mr Jean-Claude Kassi Brou at the UN House.

The UN Special Representative observed that technical preparations for the general election of 2019 were on track, synergies are being built and collaboration enhanced between the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the security forces. He also noted that there were concerns by stakeholders about the role of the security forces, in spite of assurances from the latter. He exhorted all stakeholders to redouble efforts in ensuring free, fair, and credible elections in 2019.

The United Nations, in close collaboration with ECOWAS, and other partners will continue to support the process for peaceful elections in Nigeria, including through assistance to the National Peace Committee and CSOs working on voter education and campaigns against violence in elections, in addition to various confidence building measures.

In order to enhance voter turnout, the UN Special Representative called for more sensitization, voter education and mobilization. He called on all stakeholders to do all in their endeavor to make the 2019 elections a success in the interest of the country, the sub-region and the continent. Mohamed Ibn Chambas pledged to visit Nigeria regularly ahead of the elections.

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